



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

MEMORANDUM

May 29, 1980

TO: INR - Mr. Ronald I. Spiers
FROM: INR/EX - Vincent J. Farley *VJF*
SUBJECT: INR Personnel Assignments and New Hire Procedures

Foreign Service rotational positions are filled by Foreign Service Officers who are assigned to INR by the Department's central assignments system. During the fall of 1979 a list of Department and overseas projected Foreign Service vacancies for the summer/fall 1980 cycle was circulate to all FS personnel worldwide. From December on these positions began to be filled after due consideration of the preferences expressed by officers, as well as of the requirements for each position. By early March, 30 of the 34 INR positions scheduled for rotation during this cycle had been taken care of. In April, two of the remaining four positions were filled and we expect to fill the last two positions, which have been recently reprogrammed by INR, within the next few weeks. Although there may be some gaps between the departure of present incumbents and the arrival of their replacements, most of these gaps will be of not more than two to four weeks duration--a normal situation since the Department of State does not have float positions.

INR's continuity positions are filled through the Civil Service Merit Promotion System and, since 1978, new hire employees through Civil Service (GS) outside hire procedures. The Merit Promotion System is used primarily for filling staff vacancies, but also for some officer level vacancies. This process takes a minimum of two months from the date on which a position is vacated and advertised through the GS posting system to the date on which a candidate assumes the new position. An additional several weeks or more may be required if a position description must be written or revised and its position level classified. INR fills most of its staff vacancies through this method and, though there are some gaps, these gaps are part of the general government-wide GS system.

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- 2 -

When INR wishes to hire a new continuity employee at the officer level this matter is normally handled through the Civil Service outside-hire System. Although employees of other U.S. government agencies may bid on INR and other Department of State vacancies, applicants who do not work for the federal government, or who work for exempted agencies, such as CIA, DIA, and NSA, must go through the outside-hire procedures. Until early 1978, the Department of State had used since the late 1960s a Foreign Service Reserve (FSR) and FSR-Unlimited (FSRU) system for hiring such continuity employees; but beginning in early 1978 and particularly since the introduction on the Hill in 1979 of the proposals for major revision of the Foreign Service Act, which is presently being considered by Congress, the Department of State has hired all continuity officer level employees through the GS system.

A position must be carefully written and classified, and then INR must go through the Department's central personnel system to obtain a certification from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). INR management officials met with the responsible OPM officers in May 1979 to discuss speeding up the OPM component of outside-hire requirements, and procedures were established which greatly expedited the process. Since that date, OPM has certified all candidates preferred by INR as qualified for our vacant positions. This process is called "selective certification", and, although in theory OPM could also offer other nominees from their registers of all applicants for U.S. Government employment, they have, thus far, certified the perspective employee that INR has identified through its contacts with the academic community, other government agencies, etc.

Since August 1979, INR has initiated the outside-hire of 15 officer level candidates. Seven of these individuals are now INR employees including: GS-14 Geographer; GS-13 Egyptian analyst; GS-13 Lebanese, Jordanian and Israeli analyst; GS-12 analyst for Soviet Relations with Mid-East Maghreb and Africa; GS-11 Western European analyst; GS-9 China Economist; and GS-5 Cartographer. The average time required for the security investigations for these seven employees was approximately four months. In addition, there are four other applicants who are in the SY clearance pipeline--two whose security clearances have been in process for five to six months, and two whose clearances began within the past two months. The two clearances that are taking a long time both involve applicants who have had extensive overseas experience, which thus complicates their investigations.

INR has had four individuals for whom we initiated the outside hire process, but who later decided to withdraw their applications while the SY clearance was in process. In one of these cases, the applicant decided to accept a permanent job offer from the agency (NASA) where he was already a temporary employee. A

second applicant withdrew, in part, owing to the length of time it was taking to complete his background investigation, but also, in part, owing to the fact that he did not think he could afford to live in the high cost Washington area compared to the low cost of living in the small mid-Western town where he is presently a teacher. In addition, two GS-15 specialists in politico-military affairs, who had applied to fill the Division Chief positions in the Nuclear Arms Control and General Theater Forces Divisions, both declined to continue their applications with INR after their applications had been in process for several months. One of these two applicants decided to stay in a non-career position with another section of the Department of State, and a second accepted an SES offer with his own agency (DOE).

The Office of Politico-Military Analysis (PMA) has been the most difficult INR office to staff because of its requirements for expertise, which is in short supply inside and out of government. The two GS-15 division chief positions are still vacant, but INR hopes to fill one of these through the Department's Merit Promotion System in late June, when a career employee of another section of the Department will be eligible to compete for the position. In addition, a third position in PMA is presently being filled by a detailee who will return to DIA in August; a fourth position will unexpectedly be vacated in mid-July owing to the retirement of a career FSRU employee; and a fifth position will be vacated owing to the one year detail of an INR continuity employee who was elected in late May as Chairman of the Secretary's Open Forum Panel. We would appreciate DCI support for our efforts to arrange the detail of employees of other NFIB agencies to fill PMA vacancies. At present, we have made a particularly urgent request to General Tighe to arrange a one year detail for Mr. Michael D. Davis to the position of Acting Chief of the General Purpose and Theater Forces Division.

Because the most lengthy delay in processing an outside hire applicant is in completing the background investigation, INR has worked closely with the Office of Security to prioritize its vacancies and assure that candidates are processed in the most expeditious manner possible. Although the average required time for a security investigation for INR outside-hires has been four months, this record is quite good considering that the average length of time required for the security investigation for a GS clerk-typist has been 14 months, for an FSO-18 months, and for an FS secretary 24 months. Two of the seven outside hires who entered on duty last winter were employees of the CIA and DIA, and although their current employment status facilitated their clearances, it still took three to four months to complete their investigations. We understand that clearances within the Intelligence Community cannot be transferred and each agency must complete its own investigations, but we would appreciate having the DCI look into this issue and give full support to establishing arrangements by which such clearances can be expedited.

The Department of State's Office of Security has just initiated a program under which employees in some sections of the Department, such as consular services and administrative support, will not require full Top Secret clearances, but will be hired at the level of Secret clearances. Although INR has been given an exemption to this rule because all INR employees require full Top Secret clearances, it is hoped that the lessened work load in processing Secret clearances for large numbers of State employees in other bureaus here will help the Office of Security to speed up the time required for all investigations. Not until the fall, when the present backlog of pending investigations will finally be slowly processed, will we know how effective this new hiring procedure will be.

ROUTING AND TRANSMITTAL SLIP

Date

6/23/80

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- DCI Security Committee
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